

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 23
By McLeary

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend W. Pat Hitchcock for his valor as a U.S. Marine and prisoner of war in the Pacific Theater in World War II.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, thousands of Tennesseans continue this time-honored tradition of volunteerism through service in the United States Marine Corps and other branches of the U.S. Armed Forces; a number of these are members of our "Greatest Generation," having served in armed combat during World War II; and

WHEREAS, one such gallant veteran is W. Pat Hitchcock, a resident of Jackson, Tennessee, who grew up in Minneapolis; after completing his freshman year at St. Thomas College, he accepted employment in Los Angeles and on November 28, 1939, joined the U.S. Marine Corps in search of adventure; and

WHEREAS, Pat completed boot camp in San Diego and was transferred to Headquarters, Fourth Marines in Shanghai, China; in May of 1941, he was promoted to Corporal; and

WHEREAS, the Fourth Marines were transferred to the Philippines, arriving on December 2, 1941, five days before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor; when the U.S. Asiatic Fleet left the Philippines, Admiral Hart transferred the Fourth Marines to U.S. Army command, and the Marines were deployed to the beach defenses of Corregidor; and

WHEREAS, Corporal Hitchcock was promoted to Sergeant on Corregidor, but on May 6, 1942, the Japanese stormed the island and Hitchcock and the U.S. defenders were made prisoners of war; he was held at Bilibid, Cabanatuan and Las Pinas in the Philippines; and

WHEREAS, in July of 1944, Sergeant Hitchcock was crowded into the hold of a Japanese vessel with hundreds of other prisoners and was shipped to Oeyama in Japan where he worked in a mine with other prisoners under brutal conditions; the P.O.W.s were worked hard, given little food and were frequently beaten, with the result that Hitchcock weighed only 97 pounds when released on September 10, 1945; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Hitchcock was promoted to Gunnery Sergeant in 1946, and in August of that year he received an honorable discharge from the Marine Corps; for his gallantry and valor, he received the Silver Star, the Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts; and

WHEREAS, following his discharge, Pat Hitchcock resumed civilian life in Des Moines, Iowa, where he spent the next 43 years, buying a company in 1971, and in 1979 marrying his wife, Greta; he served as president and chairman of the board of his company until his retirement in 1992; and

WHEREAS, upon retirement, the Hitchcocks took a vacation trip to Mobile, Alabama and on the way they stopped for lunch in Jackson, Tennessee; pleased with what they saw in Jackson, they completed their trip and two weeks later returned and bought a home there; and

WHEREAS, Pat Hitchcock served his nation with courage and gallantry and deserves proper recognition for heroism both in the United States Marine Corps and in society today; he is the author of *Forty Months in Hell*, an account of his experiences as a P.O.W.; and

WHEREAS, Pat Hitchcock performed his duties with the utmost skill, dedication and professionalism; his courage is unquestioned and his service can only be categorized as outstanding; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend W. Pat Hitchcock of Jackson, Tennessee, a member of America's "Greatest Generation," for valor, gallantry and meritorious service in the United States Marine Corps and as a P.O.W. during World War II and offer our thanks for his great courage and commitment to duty during a trying and perilous time.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.